Community Action on Drug Abuse Prevention

105-01753/

table of contents

Section a: about the manual **3**
What is included in this manual 3
How to use the manual 5

Section b: making things happen by working together **7**
Creating changes 7
Keys to successful activities 10
Forming a community group 13
Getting people involved 19
Working together 21

Section c: figuring out what your community needs **29**
What is a needs assessment? 29
Benefits of a needs assessment 29
How to do a needs assessment 30

Section d: things to do in your community **41**
Selecting activities 41
Prevention and youth 42
Success factors for families 44
Co-operation in the community 45
Awareness activities 46
Drug-free activities 49
Summary of activities 51

Section e: how well are things working? **53**
General information on evaluation 53
Step-by-step guide to evaluation 55

APPENDIX **63**
Access to treatment 64

about the manual

The Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC) is working with communities to prevent the abuse of drugs by youth. This manual offers information you can use to help prevent the abuse of drugs by youth in your community.

Throughout this manual, the word drugs is used to specify mood-altering substances other than alcohol and tobacco, although both of these substances are drugs. (A drug is any substance other than food that is used to change the way the body or mind functions.) This manual is to be used for community action to prevent the use of illicit drugs by youth, and the illicit use of drugs that are legally available (for example, the drug Ritalin® has a legal use to treat attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder but is used illicitly as a stimulant).

Youth from every community learn from their mentors, peers, neighbours, and friends. Your decision to become involved as a community leader is a very important step in helping young people in your area.

Drug abuse is an issue that can be addressed effectively at the community level.

This manual has been developed for use by community groups, youth, their parents, and other adults who are involved with youth. The most effective prevention program is one that

- involves youth in your community
- is developed by your community
- is delivered by your community
- is relevant to youth in your community

What is included in this manual

The manual is divided into five sections. Throughout the manual, you will find checklists and tables that will help you with each section. We suggest that you photocopy these tables and checklists before using them. This way, you will have the forms to re-use in the future.

a. About the manual

This section tells you what the manual is about and how to best use the manual in your community.

b. Making things happen by working together

This section outlines items that are important to the success of prevention activities. It also includes information on community groups. It explains what a community group is and

why setting one up is a good way to address arising issues about drug abuse and youth in your community. How to go about setting up a community group is explained using a step-by-step process. Suggestions on how to get youth and others involved and interested are also provided.

c. Figuring out what your community needs

Section C looks at community needs assessment. It explains what a needs assessment is, why doing one is important and what kind of information you can get from it. The steps involved in undertaking a needs assessment are outlined and explained. Who to get information from and the tools that are best suited to collect information are also included. Finally, it explains how you can use the information from the needs assessment to develop a plan of action for your community.

d. Things to do in your community

Section D focuses on activities you can talk about and try in your community and gives you the steps to follow in choosing activities within your community. This is followed by a description of the types of prevention activities you will need to consider. Some general ideas that can be used by families are also provided as background to choosing your activities. A list of ideas sorted by type of activity is provided in this section. Finally, an Activities Summary Sheet and a Summary of Activities by Type sheet allow you to assess the variety of activities in your community.

e. How well are things working?

Section E offers ideas about how to see whether what you are doing is working for your community. It includes general information on evaluation, such as what evaluation is, why it is important to do evaluation, and what information to collect. This is followed by a guide on how to do the evaluation in your community.

Overall steps

Each section of the manual gives information about what is involved and gives ideas on how to do the necessary steps.

Overall, the steps you will look at include

1. forming your community group
2. setting your overall goals
3. finding out what your community needs
4. deciding on activities to do in your community
5. figuring out how to do the activities (plan of action)
6. figuring out how you will evaluate activities

7. doing the activities you have chosen
8. completing the evaluation of activities
9. reviewing your goals, objectives, and activities

How to use the manual

This manual has been prepared to help your community go through the necessary steps to figure out

- ways to get your community working together
- who in your community needs to be involved
- how to get youth to participate
- whether your community needs to address drug use by youth
- how to address this need
- the strengths of your community that can help
- what activities would work best in your community
- how to put activities into place
- how to see if what you are doing is working for your community
- how to make adjustments to what you are doing and continue the community activities

This manual includes

- the things you need to know for each major step
- checklists to keep track of what needs to be done

Your community may already

- have formed a group that wants to work together on activities to improve the situation
- have started to use various activities to increase positive alternatives for youth

Your community can decide what steps outlined in this manual would be useful for your situation. Use the information and tools to best suit the needs in your community. For example, you will have to decide, based on the needs of your community, whether to focus on a specific drug or drug use in general (perhaps including alcohol and tobacco).

making things happen by working together

Creating changes

Seven principles* have been identified as important for making successful social changes:

- Believe in your ability to make a difference.
- Have a vision for a better world.
- Understand that change is a people process.
- Create caring relationships.
- Believe that everyone has the innate capacity for mental health and well-being.
- Encourage the active participation of those involved.
- Be committed and patient.

Keep these principles in mind when developing your prevention activities.

Effective prevention activities

The most effective prevention activities help reduce risk factors and encourage healthy personal development among young people.

*Creating Change Requires Vision, Interaction by Bonnie Benard, Western Regional Center for Drug-Free Schools and Communities, from Western Center News, March 1992, Vol. 5, No. 2.

Successful activities focus on a positive, healthy lifestyle throughout your community.

- Seek to change negative behaviour of youth.
- Encourage youth to make healthy decisions.
- Positive changes in attitude must be maintained by changes in the community environment.
- Activities should be promoted and accepted throughout your community.

Activities are more likely to achieve their goals if they are supported by the entire community.

- Individuals need to make a commitment to adopting a healthy lifestyle.
- Eliminate the things in your community that make it difficult for youth to make positive, alternative choices.
- Involve people with the skills necessary to teach or role model living well without drugs.
- Convince youth that the risks associated with drug abuse are not worth taking.
- Convince youth that making positive choices is better than using drugs.
- Teach youth that they can make the right choices in many different situations.

Activities should help develop healthy self-esteem.

- People with healthy self-esteem have a lower risk of substance abuse.
- Activities that contribute to healthy self-esteem are those that do not violate personal standards or go against the self-image of the individual.
- Adult and youth leaders need to show that they value, respect, and care about the youth in their community.

Successful activities will promote skill development.

- Provide youth with a chance to develop and build necessary skills to make the right choices.
- Skills that will encourage good choices include decision-making skills, problem-solving skills, communication skills, assertiveness skills, refusal skills, and coping skills.

Activities must be age-appropriate and relevant to youth.

- Give youth the facts; provide current information about drug use.
- Acknowledge the things that affect youth, and work with these factors (rather than giving youth information that they will disregard).

Activities should also be culturally relevant.

- Include a multicultural approach for prevention.
- Focus on the culture most prevalent in the area, and be aware of cultural or religious differences.

Ineffective prevention activities

It has been shown that some prevention activities are not as successful as others. In general, those that do not work are "one-time efforts." One prevention activity is more likely to succeed if done in combination with others.

The following approaches MAY NOT be as effective:*

Usually, one activity, film, guest speaker, or lesson will have a short-term effect on the audience. However, long-term change in behaviour or attitude will not happen unless more activities are planned for the near future.

These approaches tend to try to put a quick fix on a problem, almost like sweeping it under the carpet so that it isn't in full sight. For example, expelling a student from school because of drug use keeps this particular student away from others, but doesn't address the real issue of drug use by youth in your community. The school needs to work with the community to have a drug use policy. What will happen when someone breaks the rule?

Also, some prevention activities result from a tragedy. Solutions that are put into place right after the tragedy may not be well thought-out or practical. In the case of graduation, it would be better to encourage the students to make responsible choices throughout the year, not just on graduation night.

This method sees students loaded down with pamphlets, lectures, and only the technical information on the effects of drugs. Often the information is not age-appropriate, relevant, or helpful in promoting long-term change. It is important to couple this information with activities that see the youth participating in positive alternatives.

It is unrealistic for a group to bring in somebody—an "expert"—from outside the community to try to solve all the problems related to drug use by youth. People from your community need to become involved in identifying the problem, and coming up with possible solutions.

This gives your community a sense of ownership, and a sense of control over what is happening. You can use the help of an expert, but they cannot be expected to do the work alone.

Scare tactics have been used in many areas in an effort to discourage a particular behaviour. Scare tactics often portray exaggerated or worst-case scenarios, and youth often react by thinking, "It can't happen to me." This may further result in them refusing to listen to

*Step By Step: A Prevention Handbook on Alcohol and Other Drug Use, Kaiser Youth Foundation, Ministry of Health and Ministry Responsible for Seniors, Government of British Columbia.

the messages being taught. For example, a statistic commonly circulated in Alberta is that 42% of people who try methamphetamine will become addicted the first time, and that 96% become addicted if they try it more than once. There is no evidence to support this claim. On one hand, the intentions of people who use the scariest possible statistics are good: they want to protect youth from the devastating effects of addiction to this drug. On the other hand, the youth we most want to reach with a prevention message—those who have friends who use the drug—probably know the claim is not true from their own observations. Youth are unlikely to trust anything adults say, if they are given information they know to be false.

People who have abused substances and are in recovery may want to speak about their experience. While they may put a personal face to the issue, their message may be confusing. For example, they may imply that they are better people because of their past drug abuse.

However, a speaker may complement your overall strategies if

- you know, and are comfortable with, what the speaker will say
- the speaker is well prepared
- the speaker's message is consistent with the goals of your community group

Well-designed and well-promoted activities can encourage positive behaviour and result in more youth thinking about their choices. The focus of these activities should be on the positive aspects of alternative choices. In addition, activities should provide information about the negative aspects of drug use by youth.

Keys to successful activities

Being specific to your community's needs

Know what activities exist now in your community and look for others that can be added to them. Look at what is happening in your neighbourhood and figure out what activities can be expanded, changed, or added.

One way to do this is to conduct a needs assessment in your community. This will help your community to know what you need to do. You need to look for the things that get in the way of youth choosing not to use drugs. Once you know what these factors are, you can figure out ways to deal with them.

To come up with activities that will change things for youth in your community, it is critical to talk directly with youth. They will know what will work and what will not.

After your community has come up with some activities and put them into place, you will need to examine whether or not they are working. This is the evaluation part of the process.

Steps in doing a community needs assessment involving youth are described in detail in Section C. Notes on how to evaluate how things are going can be found in Section E.

Involving youth

Successful activities are designed with youth, not for youth.

It has been shown that youth react best when they hear things from their own peers and do things with them to work out problems. Youth in your community will help in coming up with activities and making them work. Adults need to be involved in providing support and resources for specific activities, but youth must take the lead role in making the activities happen.

Building a community group within the larger community

The activities must aim to prevent drug abuse by youth in your community. To be able to do this, your community must build partnerships with as many groups and individuals within your community as possible. This will increase the resources available, but more importantly, it will get a large group of people working towards the same goal.

In deciding what community groups are needed, it is important to recognize those that already exist in your community. When building new ones, it is crucial to create community group statements (guidelines) that outline the role and responsibility of each member. Members must know what they are expected to do and how they will fit within the overall group. People need to know why they are there and what they can contribute to the overall goal. Helpful hints about forming community groups are outlined in Section B of this manual.

Because each community will have specific needs, activities in each community will vary. To be successful, these activities must match your community's values and needs. These will have been identified in your community needs assessment.

Ideas for activities are given in Section D of this manual.

Involving schools

We know that schools and teachers are a major influence on teenagers. This may be even more true in rural communities. Therefore, activities need to include schools as a key partner. Their role may be supportive rather than a lead role. Schools need to be aware of the program, involved in the community group, and supportive of youth.

It is important to include teachers and educators in the program, as well as parent/student councils or advisory committees. The peer support, youth leaders, 4-H, Big Brothers Big

Sisters, and other mentors will be essential to the promotion of the program and any prevention activities. Holding activities in school facilities will also help to include schools in the program.

Keys to successful activities checklist

Check to see if your community has looked at these important things. (Remember to photocopy this form first!) (see next page)

Specific to the Community

Activities that are underway in your community

Things that get in the way of reducing drug use

What would youth in your community like to see happen?

What are your community's values and attitudes toward people who use drugs?

Involving Youth

Youth groups already in place in your community

Who (groups or individuals) do you want to involve?

Building a Community Group

Groups that already exist in your community

People or organizations that may be interested in this

What could a larger community group do?

Increasing Positive Activities

Risk factors that exist in your community

Positive alternatives that exist in your community

What can be done to promote change in your community?

Involving Schools

Extracurricular activities or groups that are available for youth

What youth are already being taught about drugs

Strategies already in place for prevention of drug abuse

One of the first steps in addressing the use of drugs in your community is to get people and groups in your community to work together. This section of the manual looks at joining forces to improve the situation in your community. Specifically, the manual gives you information in the following areas:

- forming a community group
- getting people involved
- working together

Forming a community group

We suggest that each community form a community group that can work together to look at the strengths in your community and use these strengths to reduce drug use among your youth.

By coming together in a group, different individuals and organizations can

- give their expertise and knowledge
- provide a variety of opinions and points of view
- come up with ideas for activities and possible solutions to problems
- provide support for community activities

This part of the manual includes information on whom you could involve and how they may be able to help.

The goal of your community group is to bring people, groups, and associations together to strengthen your community. By building on your community's strengths and involving youth, your community will provide youth and others with an opportunity to move in a positive direction.

Power	A combination of • resources • ideas • knowledge Equals MORE POWER More power means the community is better able to • make necessary changes • make a difference Greater Continuity Community groups have • staying power to get the job done • shared responsibility and accountability and therefore less burden on any one partner • reduced chance of "burnout" • renewed willingness to help and stay involved with each success
Commitment	Community groups • result in ongoing relationships and friendships • foster a sense of commitment to each member and to the community • let everyone know they have the ability to help

Who should be involved?

Many different people will need to become involved in order to make things work in your community. Look at what community groups already exist in your community. Many of these may provide a building block for this new group aimed at reducing drug use by youth.

Prevention activities are complex, and it makes sense to involve as many people as possible. You need to approach all people who are concerned with the safety and health of communities.

What different groups can do

To work properly, each member will need to play a specific role in order to achieve the goals. Below are some ideas about who to involve and how to involve them.

GROUP	WHO	HOW THEY CAN BE INVOLVED
YOUTH	Scouts Guides 4-H Clubs Schools Church youth groups Community youth clubs Sports clubs Drama, dance, and musical groups	being a good role model for other young people helping other youth develop skills such as – drug refusal skills – decision-making skills – problem-solving skills helping other young people be involved planning and organizing prevention activities developing and conducting surveys of the students at schools talking about what might help their community (bridging the gap between adults and youth) providing support to other young people who are having drug abuse problems providing referrals to young people who need help from others (counsellors, adults, agencies, etc.) fundraising peer education
PARENTS	Parents of youth Parents of children of any age	being good role models supporting activities by providing transportation, refreshments, fundraising, etc. providing encouragement and motivation to youth providing skills and resources that are needed
SCHOOL	Teachers Principals Other school leaders Students councils Parent advisory groups	hosting activities providing a meeting place supervising school activities related to prevention promoting the activities suggesting additional activities
POLICE	Local police Regional police	providing information telling about prevention activities they are already involved in (e.g., DARE program)
OTHER ADULTS	Coaches Instructors Relatives Friends	influencing youth as a result of good relationships encouraging and motivating youth to get involved providing good role models helping to teach youth about being good leaders

GROUP	WHO	HOW THEY CAN BE INVOLVED
MEDIA	Newspapers Radio and television stations Billboards	• promoting community groups and activities • influencing the community to get involved • helping to change the environmental factors that contribute to drug use by youth • sponsoring local activities and events
LOCAL BUSINESSES	Fast food and other restaurants Book stores Grocery stores Convenience stores Video arcades Pool halls Music stores Clothing stores	• providing funds necessary for activities • providing in-kind donations and services (such as office space for meetings, supplies for activities, promotional materials, web page design, food) • sponsoring advertisements in newspapers • providing jobs for youth
SERVICE CLUBS	Lions Rotary Club The Order of the Royal Purple Optimist International	• providing funds and volunteers • being good role models • providing prevention tools • encouraging youth to change behaviours in ways that result in healthy choices
AADAC	Local office	• providing information and promotional materials • offering advice and assistance in setting up prevention programs
LOCAL POLITICIANS	MLA MP School trustees Mayor Town councillors	• promoting the activities of the group within the community • encouraging people to get involved • helping with fundraising • being a spokesperson at events • hosting activities
RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS	Churches, Synagogues, Mosques, etc.	• hosting events • providing a meeting place • providing funds or in-kind donations
LOCAL HEALTH	Regional Health Authority Social workers Counsellors Local physicians	• hosting events • being a spokesperson at events • supplying promotional material • displaying posters in their workplace • providing information on substance abuse and the consequences

Use the following chart to keep track of who is responsible for contacting each group and what each group might be able to do. (Remember to photocopy this form first!)

Groups	What can they do in your community?	Who will approach them?	Completed?
Youth leaders			
Youth			
Parents			
Teachers			
Police			
Concerned citizens			

POSSIBLE PARTNERS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Groups	What can they do in your community?	Who will approach them?	Completed?
Media			
Local businesses (also determine which businesses to approach)			
Civic clubs (also determine which groups to approach)			
AADAC			
Local politicians			
Religious Organizations			
Service providers			
Other groups or individuals			

Getting people involved

The first step in getting people involved is to let them know what it is you want to do. What is your goal or what do you hope for the future? Your goal for your community group may be something like, "Drug-free youth living in a healthy community."

Tell people about your community group with

- flyers
- posters in supermarkets, schools, community buildings, doctors' offices, etc.
- advertisements in local newspapers and on the radio

When selecting people to promote your community group, ensure that they are well regarded and accepted by your community. It is important that they truly reflect your community and that they can uphold the values you have.

When you are promoting your community group, make sure that

- information given is current and age-appropriate
- messages are consistent
- materials used reflect your community

Why people would want to be involved

Give people reasons to be involved. Here are some examples:

- You will help to decrease the amount of drug use by youth.
- You may save youth from the damaging consequences of use of and addiction to drugs.
- It may discourage sellers of illegal drugs from operating in your community.
- It will result in increased safety for children and youth in your community.
- Your community will be a better place to live in.
- Your business will be promoted.
- Your reputation in the community will be enhanced.
- "It is the right thing to do."

Involving youth

Youth need to play a lead role in your community group. This manual and the activities your community is working toward are for them. Youth can

- discuss the issues openly:
  - What leads youth to use drugs?
  - What are possible positive alternatives that would be acceptable to youth?
- help to show other teens that the alternatives to drug use are in their best interest
- show that the community has an interest in the well-being of youth
- be actively involved in finding positive alternatives. This can make them look good in the eyes of the community and help them realize their potential

Working together

Once the members have committed to being part of your community group, working together truly begins. Your community group will be responsible for

- setting the goals
- doing the needs assessment
- selecting the activities
- making sure the activities are working

Steps

This section outlines the steps involved in setting up a community group to do the work that allows the group to achieve its goals.

Set up a meeting.	Decide on a day, time, and place where the meeting will be held. Call all the members of your community group and invite them to the meeting.
Choose a leader.	At the meeting you will need to decide who is going to be the leader. Choose a leader who – has a high degree of commitment – has a positive attitude about the success of the community group – is respected by the members of the community group – knows how to work with people – is a good listener and communicator – is fair and supportive of all individual members – is assertive and well organized It will be important to change leaders from time to time to – avoid burnout – provide a fresh approach – renew energy
Decide how often your group will meet.	Your group should meet regularly—monthly meetings should be sufficient to keep things going. Decide on a regular day and time each month when most of the members will be able to attend. If your group is large (more than 10 people), it is a good idea to set up a smaller group (5 to 6 people) that will meet monthly to guide the work of your community group and to make sure things get done. The larger community group would then meet less often.
Keep members informed about what is happening.	Tell members of your group what you are going to do in your meetings (send an agenda to all members before the meeting). Keep a record of all the things you decide in your meetings (minutes of the meeting). Send a copy of your decisions and minutes to the members of your group even if they were not at the meeting. Make sure your membership list is up-to-date and includes phone number, fax number, e-mail and mailing address for each member.
Decide on how decisions will be made.	Your community group needs to decide how it will make decisions. Your group can choose between two options: – All members must agree with the decisions made. – A specific number (two-thirds of the members is common) has to agree with the decisions.

Decide on how decisions will be made. (cont.)	Reaching agreement can be a challenge. The following tips can help your community group reach agreement: – Focus on the importance of the decision rather than on different opinions. – Respect peoples' differences and points of view. – Build on the things people agree about. – Give everyone a chance to talk and give their opinion. – Try to summarize what people are saying. – Let people agree to disagree. – Be willing to make compromises.
Decide who is going to do what.	It is important to – Outline what tasks the group is going to do as a whole. – Outline which tasks each individual is going to do. – Write a brief job description for key positions outlining specific tasks and the amount of time it is expected to take. Some of the key positions include – Leader: person who oversees and directs the activities of the group – Secretary: person who keeps track of all the decisions and takes notes – Treasurer: person who keeps track of your community group's money – Fundraiser: person who directs and leads fundraising activities – Community Liaison: person who provides and receives information to and from the community
Keep the community informed about what your community group is doing.	Encourage feedback to and from the community through – newsletters – radio announcements – posters – articles in local newspapers – a contact person and number where the community can find out more about your community group – a suggestion box in a community building to get input from your community Remember information needs to be presented – in different ways – more than once – at different levels of understanding – in a way that is sensitive to cultural differences

Write an overall goal statement about what your group wants to achieve for the future.	Writing an overall goal statement helps to – tell everyone the reason why your community group exists – encourage members to work toward a shared goal – encourage your group to work in a goal-driven way. This ensures that members of your group will believe that their efforts will be useful and make a difference – refocus the group when focus fades – sell the work of the community group in the community Tips for writing your statement – Keep it short. – Use simple words that people will remember and use. – Make it sound good. People will be using the goal statement on the telephone and at public meetings.
Set some objectives that will help your community group achieve its goal.	Tips on setting objectives – Objectives should be clear and specify measurable results. – Objectives should grow out of your goal statement. – Include some short-term objectives for early success that will keep people interested, encourage members to continue, and make others want to join. Examples of objectives are – an increase in the number of community-based activities for youth to do – a reduction in the number of drug-related charges among youth – a reduction in the number of incidents resulting from drug use by youth – a reduction in the number of youth being treated for drug use problems – a reduction in the number of medical treatments and emergencies involving drug use

Step 2 should be reviewed after your community group has done the needs assessment.

Do a community needs assessment for your community.	A needs assessment is a way for a community to better understand what the people in their community need and want. Details on how to do this are provided in Section C.

Decide which activities will help you reach your objectives.	Suggested activities are described in Section D. Be sure to choose at least one activity for each objective.

Develop a plan of action.	The plan of action provides information on the following: – which activity/activities will be used to achieve each objective – who is responsible for each activity – when the activity will start and finish – what resources are required for each activity A sample plan of action is provided below for you to fill in.

OBJECTIVE #1

OBJECTIVE #2

OBJECTIVE #3

OBJECTIVE #4

Find the things you need to do the activities planned.

Using information from the needs assessment and the resources listed in the plan of action:

List all the things you need to complete each task and activity.

List all the things that are available and identify what you need.

Generate a list of where can you can go to get the resources you still need (money, space, technical help, etc.). Possible sources include

- local businesses
- government agencies
- group members

Decide on ways that you can raise some of the money that you will need. Funds can be raised by

- bingos
- sales (baked goods, crafts, etc.)
- raffles
- door-to-door campaigns (e.g., selling chocolate bars, etc.)
- bottle drives
- barbecues
- car washes

Start collecting information to evaluate your activities and community group.

Before you implement the activities, it is important to begin your evaluation.

At this stage you will

- describe what you are doing
- decide what you want to find out
- figure out your sources of information
- develop the tools you will use

Detailed information on each step is provided in Section E.

Once you begin to undertake your activities, you can start to evaluate them, as per steps 5 through 8 in Section E of this manual.

You can also look at evaluating your community group after it has been in existence for awhile (i.e., six months).

Keep members in your community group.	To keep members interested in the community group they need to feel that what they are doing is making a difference. You can do this by – letting people know and reminding them of the successes you have had, no matter how small – making sure every member has a job to do and that they are suited to the job given to them – acknowledging peoples' contributions in some way (e.g., appreciation events, crediting success to particular individuals)
Attract new members to replace members who leave.	Keep the goal of what your group is trying to achieve out in the community. Celebrate your successes in the community. Always be on the lookout for possible members and keep a list.
Make sure there is enough money and time for the group activities to continue.	Apply for any grants/funds that are available from government, non-profit agencies, and other groups that are interested in promoting community-based projects. Hold fundraising events regularly. Request in-kind and monetary donations periodically from – local businesses – community groups
Learn for the future.	Many questions will be answered during the evaluation of your community group: – What progress has your group made? – What works well and what doesn't? Why? – What difference is your community group making in the choices youth are making? By evaluating your group and the activities you have done, you will be able to – make changes to your community group – make things better for the future

Details on how to do this are included in Section E.

figuring out what your community needs

What is a needs assessment?

A needs assessment is a way for a community to better understand what the people in their community need and want. In this manual, the focus of the needs assessment will be on the youth in your community. It will help answer the following questions:

- Do youth in your community use drugs, and if so, to what extent?
- What are youth's attitudes toward drug use in your community?
- What are the attitudes of others regarding drug use in your community?
- What are the major risk factors that may cause youth to use drugs in your community?
- What kinds of activities are available for youth in your community?
- What do youth think about the activities that are available in your community?
- Does your community need to change its activities for youth?
- What kinds of activities could your community increase?
- What activities can your community offer that it doesn't now?
- What can you do to change people's attitudes about drugs?

Benefits of a needs assessment

There are many benefits of doing a needs assessment. It will help to

- define the extent of drug use by youth in your community
- show you what your community already has for meeting the needs of youth
- show you how best to use what you have

- give youth and others a say in how to use what you have
- provide a way to find out new ideas of what you can do
- give a chance to find out what youth in your community need
- increase the chance that youth will approve of and take part in activities that result
- give youth and others in your community a chance to get involved and share their ideas

When you have completed your needs assessment you will be able to

- build on your community's strengths and successes
- identify what is missing for youth
- figure out ways to improve the situation
- take action

How to do a needs assessment

There are four main steps that you will need to look at in order to do a needs assessment in your community.

- prepare your questions
- figure out who to get information from
- collect the information
- use the information collected

1. Preparing your questions

In looking at whether your community could benefit from substance abuse prevention activities for youth, a community needs assessment will answer the following questions:

Do youth in your community use drugs?

- What things are happening that suggest your community may have a substance abuse problem?
- What proportion of youth in your community use drugs?

What do you know about drug use by youth in your community?

- Are these drugs available?
- When and where does the drug use occur?

What risk factors exist in your community that lead youth to use?

- lack of recreational activities
- availability of drugs

- peers who use drugs
- exposure to misuse of alcohol or other drugs by adults in the community
- poverty

What are the community's strengths that you can build upon?

- List people who can contribute to the solutions.
- Do an inventory of all the facilities your community has (see checklist below).
- List the extracurricular activities that are available from schools and other organizations (see checklist below).
- List which companies or organizations might be willing to sponsor your community group or any activities.
- List existing services and programs that deal with prevention and treatment of substance abuse by youth.

Your community needs to consider the above questions and come up with a list of your own questions.

It is important for your community to figure out the positive things that can be done, and to decrease the risk factors. This will help to reduce drug use among your youth.

INVENTORY OF FACILITIES THAT YOUR COMMUNITY HAS

Recreation centre	Bowling lanes
Ball diamonds	Dance studios
Skateboarding/BMX ramps	Ice rinks
Swimming pool	Gymnasium

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

2. Figuring out who to get information from

When undertaking a needs assessment, include a variety of individuals and organizations from all areas of your community. Many of the same people that are important to include in your community group will be included in your needs assessment.

For a project relating to youth, information will be obtained from a variety of sources, including

- youth
- parents
- teachers
- police
- religious leaders
- treatment and social service providers
- other groups

The following chart gives some sample questions that you can ask each group:

GROUP	SAMPLE QUESTIONS
YOUTH	• What kinds of things do you like to do? • What would you like to do, but don't? Why? • What activities would you like to see happen in your community? • Do you know of people in your school who use drugs? • What could the community do to give youth alternatives to using drugs? • What things have been tried to stop youth from using drugs? Did they work? • What other things could we try?
PARENTS	• What could we do to decrease drug use in this community? • What kinds of things have we tried already? How did they work? • What could we do differently?
POLICE	• What activities might reduce drug use? • What activities have already been tried? How did they work? (The police can also provide you with information about the number of charges laid related to drug use and about other drug-related issues.)
TEACHERS	• What is being taught to students about drug use, and what is the perceived success rate of this instruction?* • What are your thoughts about drug use and abuse among youth in your community? • What can we do to provide healthy, drug-free activities for youth? • What is a teacher's role? • What activities have been successful both at the school and in the community?

*Students may have already been exposed to such things as the Drug Abuse and Resistance Education (DARE) Program; Students Against Drinking and Driving (SADD) campaigns; or the PRIDE Guide to Prevention ("Growing Up Drug Free"). Understanding what youth already know about alcohol or other drug use and abuse gives your community an idea of where it needs to start.

GROUP	SAMPLE QUESTIONS
RELIGIOUS LEADERS	• What do you think are activities that might reduce drug use? • What activities do you think have already been tried, and how successful were they?
TREATMENT PROVIDERS	• What can we do to reduce drug use among youth in our community? • What has already been tried and how did it work? • What are the risk factors in this community that lead youth to use drugs? • Service providers may also be able to provide you with information about – the number of youth being treated for drug use problems – the number of medical treatments and emergencies involving drug use – methods of treatment available in your community
OTHER GROUPS (politicians, media, community agencies)	• What activities do you think will reduce drug use among youth in your community? • What activities have already been tried, and how successful do you think they were?

3. Collecting the information

Once your community group decides to do a needs assessment, information can be collected from

- looking at existing data
- collecting new information

Looking at existing data

As part of the needs assessment, look at actual data for your community about the use of drugs by youth. This might include looking at

- police and criminal statistics (i.e., number of charges laid over a given period of time)
- medical statistics (i.e., number of injuries or deaths attributed to drug use by youth; drug abuse treatment admission rates)
- other public records

Actual data will give you an idea of the extent of the problem and will help in setting overall goals and objectives, and in measuring the long-term success of your activities. Actual data will also help promote your shared goal and encourage people to get involved.

Collecting new information

There are many different tools that you can use to collect information from your community. They include

- interviews
- focus groups
- surveys
- public meetings/community forums

You may not need to use all of the tools listed. When deciding which tool or tools are the most useful for your community, consider the following points:

- How many people are available to work on the needs assessment? Are they volunteers or paid staff? What experience do they have in needs assessment?
- How much time do you have to produce results?
- Is there someone in your community with experience who can help? At what price?
- What facilities do you have at your disposal (access to telephones, meeting rooms, etc.)?
- How much money can you spend on the needs assessment?
- How big is the community geographically and by population?

To help you decide which tools are the best for your needs assessment, a more detailed description is provided in the following charts.

DESCRIPTION	A set of questions is used to guide the interview with a select number of people either on the phone or in a meeting. The purpose of interviews is to find out their thoughts their ideas their experiences about a specific subject any facts and information they might have
TIPS FOR SUCCESS	Ask open-ended questions that will provide you with lots of information and lead to further questions. People who are asking the questions need to be able to summarize and record the answers provided. Alternatively, you can record the interviews and have them summarized later. Schedule the interviews ahead of time.
WHO TO INTERVIEW	youth leaders (student councils, 4-H clubs, Scouts, Guides, Boys and Girls clubs, etc.) teachers and school principals local politicians police treatment providers counsellors

TOOL: FOCUS GROUP

DESCRIPTION	Informal meetings with a small number of people who have been invited to discuss questions about a specific subject.
TIPS FOR SUCCESS	Keep the number at each group small (six to eight people). Limit yourself to four or five main questions. Ask open-ended questions in order to allow for further discussion. Make sure participants understand the purpose of the focus group. Find a good facilitator or moderator to run the focus group. Make sure you have a method of recording the discussions (flip charts, tape recorder, or a note taker). Limit the time to one to two hours. Have a break halfway through and serve refreshments.
WHO TO INVITE	youth and youth leaders parents of youth community leaders

TOOL: SURVEY

DESCRIPTION	Surveys are questionnaires in which a number of questions about a specific subject are used to gather information from a larger group of people in a relatively easy and non-threatening way. Questions are short and answers to choose from are usually provided (close-ended). Surveys can either be done in person, over the phone, by mail, or by e-mail.
TIPS FOR SUCCESS	Ask clear, easy-to-understand, close-ended questions. Use information from your interviews and focus groups to help you design your survey questions. Test your survey on five people before you send it out to a larger group. This will give you an opportunity to change any questions that might cause problems. If you are mailing the survey, pay close attention to visual impact. If you have a small budget, consider using volunteers to drop off and collect surveys. This is a good way to include youth.
WHO TO SURVEY	youth community at large

DESCRIPTION	A meeting that is open to all members of the community. It includes a presentation about the topic and what is required of the community. It allows the public to ask questions and give their opinions and ideas about what to do.
TIPS FOR SUCCESS	Book a large meeting place such as a community or town hall. Run an advertising and promotion campaign for the meeting to get people to attend. Prepare an interesting presentation, and include some humour. Allow time for people to give their ideas and opinions. Record the information from the meeting. Provide refreshments.
WHO TO ATTRACT	community at large youth

The following chart shows which is the best tool(s) to get information from various groups.

Youth
Youth Leaders
Community Leaders*
Parents
Treatment & Social Service Providers
Community at Large
Media

**Includes local politicians, teachers, religious leaders, and police.*

4. Using the information collected

When you start receiving information, review the questions you want to answer from your needs assessment:

- Do youth in your community use drugs? If so, to what extent?
- What are youth's attitudes toward drug use in your community?
- What are the attitudes of others in your community towards people who use drugs?
- What are the major risk factors that may cause youth to use drugs in your community?
- What kinds of activities are available for youth in your community?
- What do youth think about the activities that are available in your community?

- Does your community need to change its activities for youth?
- What kinds of activities could your community increase?
- What activities can your community offer that it doesn't now?
- What can you do to change young people's attitudes about drug use?

Keep the above questions in mind when looking through the information collected. Information collected will fall into one of two types:

- quantitative data
- qualitative data

Quantitative data

Quantitative data includes any information that can be counted (quantified) in some manner. It includes ratings, rankings, categories chosen in close-ended survey questions (such as Yes and No), age groups, gender, etc. Most of the information you receive from your survey will be quantitative data as well as any medical and criminal statistics you are able to get.

Qualitative data

Qualitative data includes the opinions, ideas, and suggestions made by various groups of people. Information that you get from interviews, focus groups, and public meetings is more likely to be qualitative data. Summarizing qualitative data is more challenging than numerical data. Follow these steps when you are looking at your qualitative data:

- Read through all the answers to the questions from the interviews and focus groups.
- Highlight the information that is relevant. You will know that the results matter if they answer any of the questions listed on the previous page.
- Organize comments into similar categories (e.g., concerns, suggestions, strengths, weaknesses, and attitudes).
- Figure out how often the same or similar comments are said and by which category of people (youth, parents, teachers, etc.).
- Label the categories and themes that you find.
- Identify any patterns and associations. Look for differences and similarities across different groups of people.
- Treat all the information provided by individuals as confidential and never report information with names attached to it.

Reporting your findings

You will need to report and present your survey results to the audience that responded to them. If your survey was community wide, hold a public meeting or forum to present your findings.

Doing both written and verbal reports can help to communicate all of your information to all of your community.

Written reports

Presenting your findings in a written report is essential. This format will tell the complete story of your needs assessment. It will provide

- details about how you collected the information
- background of the issues
- complete tables of results
- a detailed description of what it all means

A complete written report will help give credibility to your findings.

Verbal reports

Making a verbal presentation of your results is the easiest way to ensure that your community knows what you have discovered. With a verbal report, you can

- highlight the most relevant and interesting findings
- leave the "boring" data for the written report
- tailor the presentation to different audiences (formal vs. informal; academic vs. non-academic, etc.)
- allow the audience to ask questions

Visual aids add to your verbal presentation. You might want to use slides or overhead transparencies to illustrate the highlights in charts and tables. If you write out text, be brief. Again, point out the important parts. Ensure that you have the appropriate equipment for your presentation, and a large and dark enough room.

Tips for your written and verbal reports

- Develop your written report first. Prepare your verbal report afterward.
- This helps organize and summarize your thoughts and helps to highlight your objectives.
- Focus on useful information.
- Round your figures to one decimal place (i.e., 64.8% is better than 64.789%).
- Use visual aids in your verbal presentations.

Why some presentations fail

- doesn't address the needs of the audience
- not verbally giving your findings (i.e., relying on an assumption that the audience will read and understand the written report)
- giving too much data without a summary of what it means

lack of consistency between how the data are presented (i.e., too much shifting between different types of charts makes it difficult for an audience to make comparisons and to determine what it all means)

Use graphics to show results

There are many ways and reasons to use graphics in your reports. Graphics can give your audience easy-to-read details (numbers, percentages, etc.) about your issue. For example, a table may show what issues related to drug use by youth are of concern to the respondents. A graph (pie chart, bar chart, etc.) could then be used to highlight major differences in these responses.

things to do in your community

This section focuses on activities that you can consider trying in your community and gives you steps to follow when choosing activities within your community.

Selecting activities

In this section, you will find many suggested activities that your community may want to try. These are only a sample of what is possible. Your community group will have their own ideas and you will have identified some ideas in your community needs assessment.

1. Gather Information	Gather all the details you have collected about strengths and activities in your community.	Get information from community group discussions community needs assessment make sure youth representatives from your community participate and take a lead role
2. Complete Activities Summary	Fill out the activities summary sheet.	Determine what activities – you have in your community already – are being planned – were identified in your community needs assessment
3. Review What Worked	Determine what activities have worked in the past and which have not.	Get information from – community group discussion – community needs assessment
4. Review Ideas	Review ideas listed in this section and from other resources.	Other resources may include – AADAC – Family and Community Support Services – police – school – youth clubs – youth mentors – community leaders
5. Choose Activities	Decide what activities you want to try.	Have a meeting of your community group to decide what activities you want to try.

6. Complete Plan of Action	Put activities into your plan of action.	Go back and complete your plan of action.
7. How to Get Community "Buy-in"	Talk about how your community group will promote the activities you have picked.	Promote your activities within the entire community. For an idea to work well, everyone will need to "buy into it." Talk with people. Put up posters in places where youth hang out (restaurants, pool halls, coffee houses, malls, etc.). Approach mass media (newspapers, magazines, Internet, radio, TV, billboards, etc.) to spread your message. Talk face-to-face with health-care professionals, other youth, family, etc.
8. Do the Activities	Put your activities into place.	Have the people and resources in place to do the activities. Let the activities happen as promoted.
9. Evaluate Activities & Process	Track what is happening with the activities to see what is working and what needs to be adjusted.	If an activity is ongoing, make changes as required. Once an activity is complete, determine how successful it was. Are there lessons to be learned? Should the activity be repeated later? How is the community group working?
10. Continue the Process	Continue the discussion with your community group.	Ask yourselves: What new activities and promotions would go with the ones you've already tried? What direction do you want to go in now?

Prevention and youth

Your prevention activities can either focus on staying healthy and not using drugs (awareness activities), or simply provide positive alternatives without any mention of drug use (drug-free activities). Ideally, your community should try to have a mix of both types.

Awareness activities may give youth information about the effects of using drugs, and the advantages of making the choice not to use drugs. The intent is that they will choose not to use these drugs in the first place or to stop using them.

Prevention activities often involve youth in the promotion of drug-free activities, activities that act as positive alternatives to using drugs.

Positive options could include

Alternate activities

- arts
- sports
- music

Future-oriented activities

- career planning, career fairs
- financial planning sessions (focus on relevant things: saving up for a car, travel, etc.)
- presentations from colleges and universities

Drug-free events

- battle of the bands
- sports tournaments
- all-night celebrations with a "no drugs needed" theme

These alternatives are meant to provide youth with things to do that are drug-free. If kids have positive things to do and things that they can be involved in, they will be less likely to use drugs.

The desire to "fit in" is a big influence on youth. They are trying to find their own identity, and let go of things they identified with as children. They are bombarded with new information all the time and will make decisions based on this new information and new goals.

Teenagers understand that actions have consequences, and that how they behave affects others. Discussions about drug use are incredibly important, and must focus on the consequences of negative and positive decisions. Adults need to provide strong emotional support and be good role models.

Once youth are close to or past the age of 18, they are more future-oriented than ever before. They look to adults for new ways to solve problems and make decisions, because soon they will be adults too. Parents have a new chance to positively affect their children.

Discussions about drug use can focus more on the long-term effects and showing teens how they can be good role models for younger people. Remember, even though they are searching for some independence, youth need to remain involved in family activities.

Here are some ideas for families:

Emphasize your family's values and your son or daughter's responsibility for making good decisions in all situations.

Counteract negative peer influence with parent influence.

Be clear with kids about your values.

Make sure youth understand the consequences of their behaviour.

- Emphasize that "not everyone is doing it" and that using drugs is illegal and is a bad choice that goes against your family's values.
- Meet your child's friends and their parents, share your expectations with them, and work together to develop rules about curfews, unsupervised parties, etc.

Talk with your children and spend time with them.

- Monitor your children's whereabouts and explain the importance of them telling you where they will be. Make it clear that any change in plans must be discussed with you first.
- Continue to spend private time with your children. Spending time together not talking about the "important" stuff will open the door for when your child needs to talk about something "important."
- Discuss and review with your children such things as their responsibilities at home, the time they spend watching television vs. completing homework, curfews, etc. Let them have a say, but don't disregard values.
- Continue discussions about drug use. Talk about how it affects their lives and may limit chances for their future.
- Make sure that you are up to date about any new 'popular' drugs and make sure your children have access to this current information.

Plan and encourage other activities.

- Plan supervised parties with your children and their friends.
- Encourage your teen to work on behalf of a drug prevention program (SADD, etc.).
- Encourage them to remain involved in activities such as sports, dance, music, arts, etc.
- Work with other families to plan safe activities in the community that are drug- and alcohol-free (dances, midnight basketball, etc.).
- Don't forget to include your children in the planning of family activities.

Encourage responsible decisions.

- Talk with your children about their dreams and expectations. Discuss school and career options and plans.
- Draw up a "contract" between parents and teens saying that parties will be supervised and there will be no use of alcohol or other drugs.

Success factors for families

There are a number of things that families, and specifically parents, can do to try to minimize drug use. These "success factors" are listed in the table below. Your community group may choose to use this list in a workshop for parents or for parents and youth.

SUCCESS FACTOR	SPECIFICS
Build strong relationships with your children.	• Spend time with them. • Celebrate their uniqueness. • Teach them that they are important.
Teach values and standards of right and wrong.	• Communicate values clearly and openly. – Talk about why values are important. – Teach them to make good decisions. • Evaluate your own actions (be a good role model). • Ensure there are no conflicts between your words and your actions.
Set and enforce rules for behaviour.	• Be specific. – What are the rules? – What are the reasons for the rules? – What are the consequences? – Why are the consequences needed? • Be consistent (make sure your children realize that the rule is always the same, no matter where they are). • Be reasonable.
Know the facts about drugs.	• Be sure you have a working knowledge about the drugs you want to discuss. – What effects do these drugs have on the mind and body? – What are the dangers? – What are the legal aspects of these drugs (for adults)? – What are some signs that your children may be using these drugs (changes in behaviour, in appearance, etc.)?
Listen to your kids.	• Talk about drugs long before they become an issue. • Be a good listener; don't let anger or judgments stop you from hearing what is being said, and don't interrupt. • Watch body language. • Be available to talk when your child wants to (or if you can't give your full attention at that time, set aside a time to do so). • Be clear in your messages. • Be a role model for good behaviours.

Co-operation in the community

School-parent cooperation

For a school-based prevention program to succeed, strong policies (rules and their consequences) must be developed. This includes policies about the use, possession, and sale of drugs (including alcohol and tobacco). If there is no policy, parents can work with teachers, administrators, and others to develop one. Parents can also ensure that drug education is being taught at all levels and that the information given to students is up to date and age-relevant. Access to referral sources or community resources is important.

Parent-community activities

When parents support community activities that promote healthy decisions and alternatives, children see this as being a good role model. Parents can help to organize events such as alcohol- and drug-free graduations, serve as chaperones, or help the event by soliciting for funds.

Community activities

To be successful in reducing use of drugs, the community must work together to

- form a community group to work together on this issue
- have the community group take a critical look at what is happening in your community
- choose activities that will fit with your community's needs
- check to see whether efforts are successful and make necessary adjustments

The next section of the manual gives you suggestions for activities you might want to try. The list of ideas has been adapted from many sources.*

Awareness activities

Community focused awareness

The University of Portland (Zimmerman, 1997) had a campaign designed around the numbers "70-30." They saturated the entire campus with these numbers (campus newspaper, campus radio, banners, etc.). And finally the meaning of the numbers was revealed: 70% of students didn't drink or drank fewer than five drinks at a single occasion, compared with 30% of students who participated in binge drinking. This information became the basis of the next phase in their campaign: "The party's not as big as you think."

An AADAC survey in 2002 showed that only 5.6% of Alberta youth had tried either crystal methamphetamine or ecstasy in the previous year. The same survey showed that most youth (68.6%) reported no use of illicit drugs (that's use of all illegal drugs, including cannabis) during the previous year. You may want to adapt Portland's 70-30 campaign to apply to the drug or drugs you are targeting.

Video production

Have students make a video showing different situations and ways to refuse drugs. Use the video as a teaching tool for different grade levels throughout the community.

Have the youth from your community high school who do not use drugs create a video that shows the reasons why they choose not to use drugs and the rewards they get from this choice. Their reasons may range from the presence of an alcohol or other drug problem in their family to the belief that using drugs will interfere with their sporting activities, etc. Show the video to new students (Grade 9 or 10 students) and their parents as part of

* Students Against Drinking and Driving (SADD) website; *PRIDE—Guide to Prevention; Social Marketing Strategies for Campus Prevention of Alcohol and Other Drug Problems.*

their orientation. It will take time for the benefits of this video to be known; perhaps by showing it to new students for three or four years in a row, you will be able to measure the impact it has on drug use by youth overall.

Drama club

Have the school drama club create a play that includes a prevention message.

Newspaper ads/bulletins

Use the school paper, community paper, PTA newsletters, and school announcements to publish consequences of drug use, sources of help, etc.

Top 10 list

Borrow parts of popular television shows or movies to highlight your activities. For example, create a "Top 10 List" (from David Letterman) of reasons not to use drugs. Make posters or flyers advertising this. Distribute to youth groups, teams, etc.

Newspaper ads

Have the youth in your community produce newspaper ads that reflect healthy choices. Make them relevant to your community and include options that are easily accessible for the youth in your area. They can include quotes from their peers, and promote drug-free events in your community. Run them in newspapers with catchy text and pictures. Include information about the impact of using drugs on their health, safety, and social life.

Red ribbon rampage

Tie red ribbons on all doors, lockers, car antennae, and light poles as a reminder to stay safe and promote a drug-free school.

Theatre slides

Provide local movie theatres with slides depicting your message to include in their previews. Use a believable message; avoid scare tactics.

Website

See if your community can set up a website listing sources of help (or add these sources to your town's existing website). On your website, encourage visitors to access information about drugs of abuse at www.aadac.com. Because visiting a website is anonymous, youth may be more likely to get information for themselves or friends they feel may have a problem. You could approach a local business or individual to design the site, and could get sponsorship from the site host for the maintenance of the site.

Media announcements

Work with the school paper, community paper, TV and radio stations, etc. to deliver information about what your community group is doing or promoting to decrease drug use by youth in your community.

Parades

Organize a parade with the theme of safety and abstinence, and present other activities for youth, positive decisions, etc.

Seminars

Offer workshops or seminars for parents, teachers, and peers. Cover topics dealing with youth, drug use, pressures, refusal skills, etc.

Guest speakers

Recruit local celebrities and businesspeople who can talk to youth to help reinforce positive messages.

Announcements

Have school announcements each morning for one week dealing with making healthy choices. If you are having a one-day event, do the announcements at the start of each new class.

School/community murals

Make a mural with messages about making healthy choices. Ask each student to participate. Have a public dedication with city officials or school administration.

Game show

Use the outline of a TV game show (Win, Lose or Draw, Family Feud, etc.) and change it to fit the design of a school assembly. Have contestants from each class and have the answers/drawings/etc. Depict a safe holiday season (or something similar).

Summer safe cards

As students leave school in June, give out cards that read, "See you in the Fall"—asking them to be safe during the summer months.

Friends are forever chain

Create a chain of handprints (in paint) on the school sidewalk or community main street. Use a "Stay Safe" theme such as "Take a Hand in Friendship—Say No to Drugs."

Trash can decoration

Paint trash cans in your school or community with the message, "Trash drug abuse." Make the message stand out by using fluorescent or bright colours.

Valentine messages

Sell carnations or buttons with the message "I don't use drugs because I love _____."

Drug-free activities

All-night celebrations

With parent groups or teachers, organize an "all night" event for students, complete with non-alcoholic refreshments, music, dancing, and sports as an alternative to "another bush party." This could be a fundraiser for another community group or need.

Cultural events

Get youth involved in a sweat, traditional dance, or other cultural activity that will help them find meaning, connection and belonging without using substances.

Charity event

Organize a charitable activity for youth, such as a sponsored fast to raise funds to combat world hunger.

Fashion show

Sponsor a fashion show to raise funds for community awareness of the issue of youth drug use. Have local merchants supply clothing, and have students act as the models.

Drama or music production

Create a drama or musical presentation with a prevention message, or one that involves a large number of youth from your community. Try to involve those who do not have acting or musical skills in preparing props, setting up lights, preparing the programs and so on.

Video production

Have youth make a video about positive drug-free activities, why they are important to them, and how these activities help them to avoid the use of drugs.

Other actions

- Help to popularize ideas about drug-free events and encourage favourable changes in individual behaviours.
- Give youth the chance to learn skills in the arts, sports, or in music. Be sure to find alternatives for all kids, no matter what their interests are.
- Encourage dancing, sports, and other extracurricular activities that promote no drug use.
- Organize a battle of the bands, mock Olympics, poster/essay contest, etc.

Future-oriented activities

Plan future-oriented activities (activities to get youth thinking more about their future):

- Career planning
- Presentations from colleges and universities

Financial planning

Hold financial planning sessions for youth (saving up for a car, travelling, investing, etc.).

Goal-setting

Provide goal-setting education for students. Focus on things like school, careers, family, and other future-oriented pursuits.

Volunteer activities

Encourage youth to volunteer within your community.

Career fair

Plan a career fair with exciting career choices, featuring architects, musicians, theatre workers, promoters, travel agents/workers, tour guides, etc.

No-drug days

Organize days that are both alcohol- and drug-free (community focused, not just for youth). Have lots of fun things to do for the entire community (fair, carnival, rides, street performers, etc.).

Speakers

Invite speakers to make presentations to youth in your community (e.g., kids who have left the community and "done well in life" could come back to speak to students about making positive choices, planning and dreaming for the future, etc.).

Parent information night

Gather a panel of local experts and invite parents to ask questions related to the use of drugs by youth (e.g., how to talk to your kids about drugs, what are the dangers of these drugs, where to get help, etc.).

Fundraisers

Help youth to organize and run fundraisers for community groups that help other groups within your community.

Summary of activities

Activities summary sheet

Your community group can use this summary sheet to keep track of activities in progress, activities you have planned, or new ideas. Photocopy the form so that you can use it a number of times. (Or make copies so that all group members can use it.)

	What is it? Who is/will be involved? What is it meant to do? Does it fit with your goals and objectives? How are youth involved? What positive things will result from this activity?	Is it in progress? When will it end? If finished, is it going to be repeated?
Currently underway in your community		
Being planned in your community		
Identified in community needs assessment		
New ideas your community wants to try		

Summary of activities by type

Your community group can use this form to list your activities. This will help ensure that you are doing a mix of both types of activities.

how well are things working?

This section of the manual includes general information on evaluation, such as

- what evaluation is
- why it is important to do
- what information to collect

This is followed by a step-by-step guide on how to do the evaluation.

General information on evaluation

What is evaluation?

Evaluation looks at the effectiveness of an activity, a program, or a process. In this manual and for your community, the evaluation will look at these questions:

- Did the activities get put in place as planned?
- How well are the activities you have chosen working?
- How well is your community group working?

Why is evaluation important?

Evaluation can help to

- clearly describe the activities you are trying to do
- determine whether or not an activity should be continued
- determine what might need to change to improve success
- measure success of the community group at meeting goals and objectives
- give the community group information about fine-tuning the overall intent and goals of the group
- provide feedback to the general community on the work of your community group
- provide information to funders

Evaluation will help assess whether the activities and the community group have been successful in moving toward the goal of reducing drug use among youth in your community.

What information is collected?

In an evaluation, information can be collected on the activities you are doing, how well they are working, and how well your community group and the community are receiving them. The type of information you collect will depend on which parts of the program you want to evaluate, how much time you have for the evaluation, and how many resources you have to implement any changes suggested by the evaluation.

The two main types of evaluation are process evaluation and outcome evaluation.

In a process evaluation you will look at how well the program or activity was delivered. Specific questions asked in a process evaluation can include the following:

- Did our community group work well together?
- Did we meet our deadlines?
- Was the timing of the activity appropriate?
- Was the location for the activity good?
- Were the activities well attended?
- Did the activities work out as planned?
- How can the implementation of the activities be improved?

The purpose of an outcome evaluation is to look at the intended goals/objectives of your activity or program and to determine if these were met. This type of evaluation will tell you how effective your program has been in reaching the intended outcomes. Specific questions asked in an outcome evaluation can include the following:

- What is the overall goal of the project?
- Were the activities consistent with the overall goal?
- How did the program help to achieve the overall goal?
- What were the objectives?
- Are the objectives realistic given the result of the program?
- Did the program achieve the objectives?
- Were some objectives difficult to achieve? Why and how will you address these in the future?
- What changes have there been in drug use?
- Was the community satisfied with the program?
- Were youth satisfied with the program?

Step-by-step guide to evaluation

Step 1. Describe what you are doing.

Step 2. Decide what you want to find out.

Step 3. Figure out your sources of information.

Step 4. Develop the tools you will use.

Step 5. Collect the information.

Step 6. Examine the information.

Step 7. Discuss how to improve things.

Step 8. Communicate the results.

Resources

Evaluation requires resources. Funding should not be underestimated or excluded from planning. As well, clear goals and objectives are necessary to focus the evaluation and determine appropriate methods for evaluation. Information from the needs assessment can be used as a baseline measure when looking at change as part of the evaluation.

Timing of steps

Steps 1 through 4 can be done as soon as your community group has decided on your goal, objectives, and activities. The goals and objective of the program or activity are used to structure the evaluation. Steps 5 through 8 will be done after your activities have been put in place or after your community group has been working together for some time.

How you carry out Steps 5 through 8 will depend on the number and type of activities you choose to do. Some activities will be one-time events that can be evaluated immediately. Other activities will go on for a period of time and will need to be in place for a while before you can get any useful evaluation information.

STEP 1: DESCRIBE WHAT YOU ARE DOING

Describe your community group and what you are doing.

In this step you will gather information about your community group and the activities you are doing. You will gather together the information from

- your discussions as a community group
- your community needs assessment
- your decisions about activities

This will include a description of your community group's

- overall goal
- objectives
- activities (what has been done to achieve goals and objectives)
- other relevant information

This description will help to make sure that you ask the right questions and gather the right information.

You can use the sample evaluation tracking form at the end of this section for each activity you are evaluating.

STEP 2: DECIDE WHAT YOU WANT TO FIND OUT

Figure out what questions you should ask.

In this step, your community group will decide which questions your evaluation must answer.

Decide whether you are doing a process evaluation, outcome evaluation, or both. This will affect the type of information you collect. (See "What information is collected?" in this section of the manual for descriptions of these two evaluations.)

You will need to look at this step for all the activities you decide to do. Some of the activities can be evaluated immediately (for example, after a workshop). Others will be evaluated after they have been in place for a while.

If you want to find out if there has been a change in behaviours or attitudes because of your program, you will have to do a pre-test and a post-test. Measure the behaviour or attitude before the program and after the program. Then compare the two measures to see what changes happened.

For example, if one of your objectives for the seminar you implemented was to increase knowledge of addictions, you should have people complete a questionnaire before and after they attend the seminar.

Figure out where to get your information.	How will you collect the information?
	Who will be involved in collecting the information?
	What methods will be used to collect the information? (i.e., determine whether a survey, interview or focus group should be used)
	Do you have any ideas for how youth can be involved or lead evaluation activities?

Other evaluation resources

Information provided for the next few steps is very basic. Unless you have conducted evaluations before, you will need to refer to other resources to help you in developing evaluation tools, collecting information, analyzing information, and reporting evaluation results.

You can refer to Section C for methods and what tools may be most useful in your evaluation.

The following is a list of some other helpful evaluation resources:

1) Denham, Donna and Gillespie, Joan. (1996). *Guide to Project Evaluation: A Participatory Approach.* Ottawa: Health Services and Promotion Branch.

   An overview with good direction on how to define the program and objectives. www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/phdd/resources/guide/index.htm#CONTENTS

2) Health Canada. (1998). *Community Action Resources for Inuit, Métis, and First Nations: Evaluating.* Ottawa: Office of Alcohol, Drugs and Dependency Issues, Health Canada. Provides a step-by-step approach to conducting an evaluation. http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hecs-sesc/cds/pdf/evaluating.pdf

3) World Health Organization. (2000). *Evaluation of Psychoactive Substance Use Disorder Treatment, Workbook Series.*

   This is a more detailed guide. It provides more in-depth information about planning an evaluation and about how to carry it out, and some guidance about research methods.

   Overview of the series: http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/2000/WHO_MSD_MSB_00.2a.pdf

   Guide to planning an evaluation:
   http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/2000/WHO_MSD_MSB_00.2b.pdf

   Guide to implementing an evaluation:
   http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/2000/WHO_MSD_MSB_00.2c.pdf

4) Wong-Rieger, D. and David, L. (1996). *A Hands-on Guide to Planning and Evaluation.* Ottawa, ON: Canadian Hemophilia Society. Available from the National HIV/AIDS Clearinghouse (www.clearinghouse.cpha.ca).

   Provides information on planning and evaluating programs. Targeted to practitioners and volunteers.

These resources and others are available through your local library or on the Internet.

Create the tools you will use to evaluate your activities.	In this step you will take the questions you want to ask, and decide on the method you are going to use. This may include coming up with - a list of four to five questions for a focus group - an interview guide - a telephone survey - whatever fits the particular activity you are evaluating There are standardized assessment tools as well as evaluation measures that groups might choose to use rather than creating their own. Check in other evaluation resources for ones that may be appropriate for your project.

Collect the information you want.	The youth in your community can participate in this step as much as possible. They could - do some interviews - hold a focus group - help organize the information as it is collected *This step will need to be repeated for each activity you do. Your community group will also collect information from each other about how the group is working.*

STEP 6: EXAMINE THE INFORMATION

Examine the information you have collected.

Read through all the answers to the questions from the interviews, surveys, and focus groups. For qualitative information (refers to open-ended responses such as, "How could the program have been improved?"), do the following:

1. Highlight the information that is relevant.
2. Organize comments into similar categories (e.g., concerns, suggestions, strengths, weaknesses, attitudes).
3. Figure out how often the same or similar comments are said and by which category of people (youth, parents, teachers etc.).
4. Label the categories and themes that you find.
5. Identify any patterns. Look for differences and similarities across different groups of people.

For quantitative information (refers to fixed answer responses such as, "Did you like the program, yes or no?"), do the following:

1. Count the number of persons responding to your survey or interview.
2. Count the number of times people responding answered a question in a particular way (e.g., how many said "Yes" and how many said "No").
3. Calculate totals, averages and percentages for questions where it makes sense to do so (e.g., close-ended questions), and where this type of information is needed and will be used.
4. Look for patterns and associations. Consider responses for the groups as a whole and look for differences between sub-groups of respondents (e.g., parents, teachers).
5. Consult a reference text or seek advice from an individual familiar with quantitative and/or statistical data analysis.

Treat all the information provided by individuals as confidential and never report information with names attached to it.

Discuss how things can be improved upon for next time.

Your community group can use what you have learned from your evaluation to figure out

- if the program objectives were realistic
- how to make your activities better
- what you need to change

1. Try to look at the findings from the evaluation in an objective way. Have group members pretend that they are not involved with the group or the activity, and have them write a conclusion based on what is known from the evaluation findings. Use these conclusions to outline what you have accomplished and what more there is to do.
2. Make recommendations based on what you discovered, not on what you wanted to discover.

Tell the community what was accomplished.

It is very important to share your findings with the broader community, or duplication may occur. Reporting is important in letting people know what is happening and what positive outcomes are happening for the community.

Look for ideas in Section C.

Sample evaluation tracking sheet

You can use the following form to begin evaluating each activity your community group is pursuing. Completing this form will get you started, but is not an evaluation in and of itself.

Remember to photocopy this form so you can use it over again each time you try a new idea.

SAMPLE EVALUATION TRACKING SHEET

Activities

Description

What are the goals for youth?

Objectives

Results of activities or programs (describe)

What should change? (Expectations for behaviours, attitudes)

What actually happened?

APPENDIX

Resources

Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC). (1996). *AADAC Prevention—A Vision for Success.* Author.

AADAC website. (http://www.aadac.com)

Benard, B. (1992, March). Creating Change Requires Vision, Interaction. *Western Center News, 5*(2).

Collaboration Framework—Addressing Community Capacity. (1995). National Network for Collaboration. (http://crs.uvm.edu/nnco/collab/framework.html)

Government of Canada. (1997, August). *Collaborate! Health and Enforcement in Partnership: How to Build Partnerships for Alcohol and Other Drug Projects.* (http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca)

Kaiser Foundation, Ministry of Health and Ministry Responsible for Seniors. Government of British Columbia. (1992). *Step By Step: A Prevention Handbook on Alcohol and Other Drug Use.* Government of British Columbia.

Kerr, Donna. (2001, February). *Rural Prevention for Youth Aged 15–17: A Literature Review.* AADAC.

McDermott & Associates Consulting. (1999, November). *Monitoring and Evaluation Framework: A Guide for the Silver Birch Child & Family Services Authority and Its Service Providers.* Silver Birch Child & Family Services Authority.

New Brunswick Education website. *Suggested Partnership Development Process.* (http://www.gnb.ca).

Parent Resources Institute for Drug Education. (1990). *PRIDE: Growing Up Drug Free, A Parent's Guide to Prevention.* Author.

Rossi, P. H., Freeman, H. E., & Lipsey, M. W. (1999). *Evaluation: A Systematic Approach, 6th Edition.* SAGE Publications.

SADD (Students Against Drinking and Driving) website. (http://www.saddalberta.com)

Salant, P., & Dillman, D. A. (1994). *How to Conduct Your Own Survey.* John Wiley & Sons.

Zimmerman, R. (1997). *Social Marketing Strategies for Campus Prevention of Alcohol and Other Drug Problems.* Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention, U.S. Department of Education.

Access to treatment

Some teens need counselling only; others need more intensive support. AADAC offers different levels of treatment to meet these varying needs.

Across Alberta, AADAC's area offices provide a range of services:

- individual and group counselling
- family counselling
- referral to 12-step programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous
- information
- referral to intensive treatment or community-based programs

Our youth centres in Calgary and Edmonton offer intensive treatment with residential support.

To find out more about these services, or to request treatment, call your local AADAC office (listed in the telephone book under Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission) or call our toll-free line at 1-866-33AADAC (1-866-332-2322). More information about AADAC and about alcohol, other drugs and gambling can be found at www.aadac.com.

AADAC

Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission
An Agency of the Government of Alberta

For more information, contact your local AADAC office,
call 1-866-33AADAC or visit our website www.aadac.com

AADAC© 2004

ISBN 0-7785-3293-3